



Epsom Coach and Bus News



Christmas 1997

MD's Message

The new year will be a very significant one for the Company with many new developments.

The recent expansion on the bus side has doubled the size of bus fleet and will enable benefits of scale to both our bus and coach operations. Throughout the industry a great deal of rationalisation has taken place and companies are now divided into very small or very large units. Whilst bigger may not always be better, the change is inevitable and I believe we have to continually adapt and improve in order to meet these challenges. Having said this, we will of course be aiming for the same levels of excellence throughout the increased operation.

1998 will see the redevelopment of the covered parking area. This project has been considered for a number of years and should come to fruition in the first half of the year. The result will create a larger open parking area with increased space for manoeuvring. Without so many intrusions it is hoped to cut down the number of accidents that occur on the premises significantly. There are many other benefits including cheaper insurance, reduced lighting costs and reduced business rates. The opportunity will also be taken to recycle the vehicle wash water and the whole garage area will be resurfaced with falls to allow for drainage.

On the coach side we are taking delivery of four new Dennis Javelin GX fitted with Berkhof Radial coachwork. The new vehicles will have standard 53 seat layout, Webasto heating and fridge located beside the courier seat. Despite the expansion on the buses, the coach side is very much alive and well.

All in all, 1998 should be an exciting year for everyone involved in the Company. My very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

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Andrew Richmond

Welcome!

What a busy month it is has been since the last newsletter. We welcome the following staff who have joined the bus team. Justin Ballard, Kevin Bay, Simon Benford, Kevin Bixley, Tony Bradbury, Stuart Davidson, Bob Din, Barry Lovell, Rob O'Farrell, Phil Pine, Ron Strutt, John Tyson, Mike Waterfall, Martyn Yates, Stephen Mills, Paul Douglas and shortly to undertake training, Dean Baron and Shane Pemberton. We also welcome to the coaches Robin Gill. We hope you will enjoy working with us and wish you every success. Also joining us in the Service department is Tony Storey and Tony Loftus. Sadly, we say goodbye to Graham Abraham, Ashley Crouch and Paul Morris. We wish them well in their new careers. James Prince is also moving on, although not very far! He will finally be able to

demonstrate just how to do it as he joins the driving team.



More Staff News

As part of greater integration for the Coach Hire operations team, Jackie Askins, Leah Holloway and Claire Devaney will be revising their working hours to include Saturday mornings. This will ensure that we can maximise sales in what is at this early stage proving to be a bumper December. Lee Coleman is also giving operational support over the weekends. Over the next few months those who are not already qualified will be studying hard for their CPC's (Certificate of Professional Competence) giving even greater in-depth knowledge of

the industry to forward our continuing success.

Luis Castenheiro and Dean Squires will be acting in a Caretaker role for bus control over the next few months. After a period of some expansion we are aiming for consolidation in improving the quality of the service we provide in conjunction with London Transport and Surrey County Council.



We welcome back Tim Harris and Graham Lumley following periods of hospitalisation, both having "bits" removed. Apparently not vital though! We wish them both a speedy recovery. We also hope that Sindy Urry has recovered from her recurring bouts of ill health and is on the mend.

Alistair Scott wishes to announce that his hair is now blonde, if you hadn't already noticed. This in keeping with his extremely trendy image, he of the leather trousers!

A good night was enjoyed by all those who attended the T.J.'s Christmas celebration on the 12th December. As always, censorship has been placed on reporting from the event, but we are assured that everybody understands what went on.

A group of staff recently watched a recording of This is Your Life at Teddington Studios. The subject being Brian Murphy of "George & Mildred" fame. Further TV studio visits are planned, watch this space...



25 years

Dave Broughton, John Reeves, Charlie Kingsley and Graham Abrahall recently celebrated 25 years service with the Company. At a presentation ceremony, they were presented with gifts and certificates from the Company to commemorate this milestone in their careers, followed by lunch with the directors at the Beefeater on Tattenham Corner. We offer our congratulations to all those concerned and look forward to future long service awards.



Wash Chaos!

With the increase in the bus fleet, there has been considerable congestion at the wash in the evenings. We are working hard to eradicate that and intend to appoint two people to work overnight to clean & fuel the buses. This will avoid the queue and no doubt the drivers concerned will be delighted

to hear this. We hope to get this underway early in the New Year. Coach drivers also will benefit as they will have free access to the wash and fuel pump facilities, but it is important that you approach from the Felstead Road end of the estate to avoid congestion as this will be to everyone's benefit.



Redevelopment

Big changes are planned for 1998 to make access round the premises easier, cut costs and reduce vehicle damage. This will involve removal of part of the garage structure and renovation of the ground surfaces, together with improvements to the wash area. Watch this space, further news will be released in January.



Coach Developments

With the market for second hand coaches being extremely slow, we have finally managed to sell off four vehicles this year, they being 516, 517, 519 & 531. There appears to be a depression in the second-hand coach market and indeed new coach sales are also down. However, four new coaches are on order and they will be delivered in early March, giving us a fleet of 33 coaches for the forthcoming season. Forward bookings look extremely healthy, although this is not always indicative of a good season, but is certainly a pointer in the right direction. Steve Whiteway is currently negotiating with several major tour operators for 1998 and it is likely the volume of school business will drop substantially, given higher prices, although forthcoming legislation for seatbelts to be fitted to pre '88 vehicles may create a shortage of coaches for this type of work. Of course, all our vehicles have been fitted with seatbelts for some years and are

post '88, giving us a considerable commercial advantage.



Bus Routes

The London tendered routes are settling down, although inevitably there have been teething problems, particularly with the Metrorider buses. A complete overhaul has been carried out on the Metroriders and they now seem to be more reliable, although there are still niggling problems. Two buses have been hired through the latter part of November and December to facilitate this overhaul and they will be returned to the hirer on the 19th December. Everyone can play their part by treating vehicles sympathetically, particularly tyres and transmissions. This will save the Company money and enable us to reward staff accordingly. With this in mind a points system will be introduced for driving staff, which will determine the annual bonus, dependant on performance of individuals and the Company.



Annual Do!

The Company's annual get together will this year be held on Saturday 31st January at the Conservative Club in Epsom. The one concern at present is that Jason Yallop has promised to make a speech, efforts are now being made to remove his vocal chords, which will no doubt come as a relief to most of us! We hope to have a live band and of course plenty of good food, courtesy of Liquorish & Harris Caterers and not forgetting the sterling work put in by the members of the Committee for the Social Club. We hope you can all come and look forward to an enjoyable evening.

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year To You All!